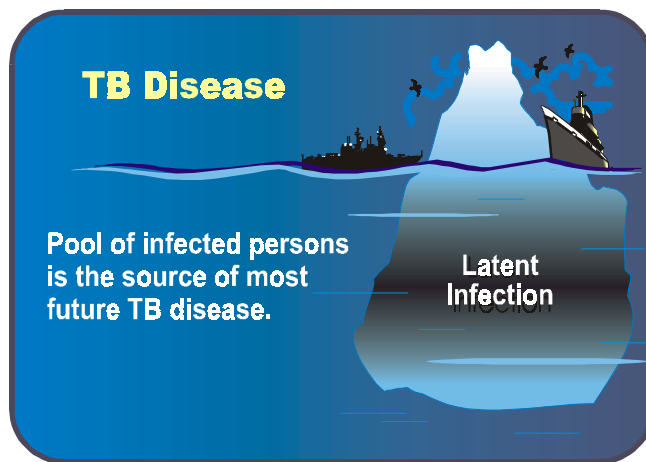


Status of the Tuberculosis Epidemic in the United States

Tuberculosis (TB) is a disease that is spread from person to person through the air. It is one of the most common infections in the world. Globally, one third of the population is infected, and about 8 million people develop TB disease every year. About 3 million people die of TB yearly, making it the leading infectious killer of young adults. About half of these deaths occur in HIV-infected persons. In the United States, over 17,000 cases of TB occur annually.

TB Continues to Lurk Beneath The Surface

- ▶ TB is caused by an organism called *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*. When a person with infectious TB disease (TB that can be spread) coughs or sneezes, tiny particles containing *M. tuberculosis* may be expelled into the air. If another person inhales air that contains these particles, transmission from one person to another may occur.
- ▶ Persons exposed to TB disease may develop latent TB infection. There are an estimated 10 to 15 million Americans with latent TB infection, and about 10% of these infected individuals will develop TB disease at some point in their lives. A higher proportion develop TB disease if coinfecting with HIV, the cause of AIDS.



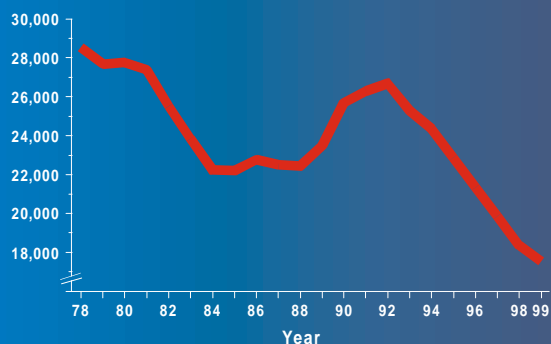
Have We Learned Our Lesson?

- ▶ In the 1970s and early 1980s, the nation let its guard down and TB came back with a vengeance. The country became complacent about TB, and many states and cities redirected TB prevention and control funds to other programs. Consequently, the trend toward elimination was reversed and the nation experienced a resurgence of TB with a 20% increase in TB cases reported between 1985 and 1992. Many of these had drug-resistant TB.
- ▶ The nation's mobilization of additional resources in the 1990s has paid off; 1999 represented the 7th consecutive year of decline in reported TB cases. This recent recovery has put us back on track toward TB elimination.

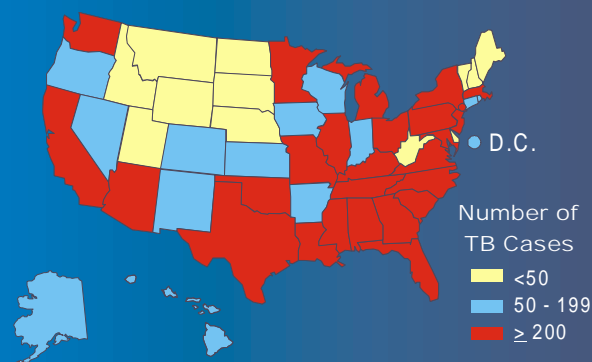
Back on Track Toward TB Elimination

- ▶ Steady progress is now being made toward elimination of TB in the United States.
- ▶ In 1999, there were 17,528 cases of TB disease reported in the United States, declining 5% from 18,361 cases in 1998.
- ▶ This represents the 7th consecutive year that TB cases have declined nationally.
- ▶ Similar sustained decreases have been seen in a number of states, including the 7 states accounting for approximately 60% of the national total (California, Florida, Illinois, New York, Texas, New Jersey, and Georgia).

**Reported TB Cases
United States, 1978 - 1999**

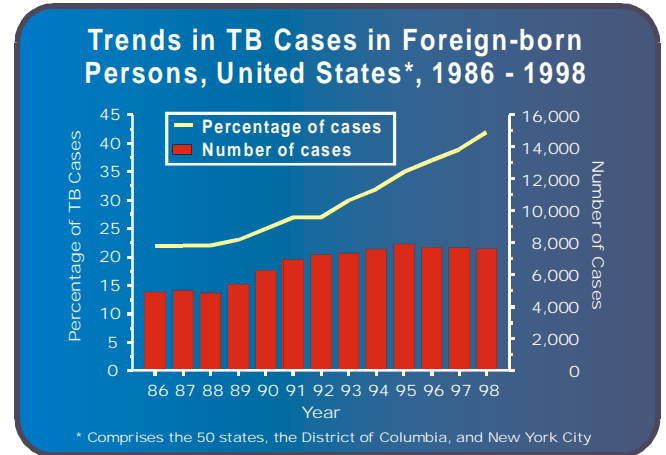


Number of Reported TB Cases, 1999



Back on Track, But Serious Concerns Remain

- ▶ Every one of the 10-15 million Americans with latent TB infection has the potential for progressing to TB disease.
- ▶ Over 17,000 cases of TB disease occur annually and every case is a potential outbreak if not promptly recognized and treated. The 50 states and the District of Columbia continue to report TB cases each year.
- ▶ If people with TB disease do not complete therapy for at least 6 months, they can develop and spread strains of TB that are resistant to available drugs, and therefore very difficult to treat. One case of multidrug-resistant TB can cost up to a million dollars. During 1993-1998, 45 states and the District of Columbia reported cases of multidrug-resistant TB.



- ▶ An increasing proportion of cases in the United States are among people born in areas where TB is common, such as Asia, Africa, and Latin America. The percentage of cases in foreign-born individuals increased from 22% of the national total in 1986 to 42% in 1998.
- ▶ People living with HIV are at extremely high risk for getting sick with TB once infected with the germ. Approximately 10% -15% of TB cases nationwide are reported in persons living with HIV.

Finishing the Job

▶ The use of DOT in TB prevention must be expanded.

Incomplete TB therapy and drug-resistant strains continue to threaten public health. Recent surveys demonstrate that poorly administered TB treatment continues to foster drug resistance. Health departments must expand treatment and prevention programs, including directly observed therapy (DOT), to ensure that people complete prescribed regimens.

▶ Eliminate TB as a public health threat.

Health departments must strengthen their TB programs. Targeted testing and treatment of latent infection among high-risk groups must be substantially strengthened. Health Departments in high and low-incidence areas must be prepared for TB outbreaks.

▶ TB has to be fought globally to protect locally.

Almost 2 billion people (*one third of the world's population*) have latent TB infection. In an era marked by increased international travel and a global marketplace, no region of the world is immune from outside influences. International collaboration will be essential to eliminate TB. TB does not stop at U.S. borders, nor can prevention efforts.

▶ New tools will be needed.

In addition to using already established tools and strategies more effectively, new strains of TB call for the development of improved diagnostic tests and new drugs. Given the global TB burden, a new and effective vaccine is desperately needed to ensure the reduction of human suffering from TB.



The challenges of TB prevention have evolved over the years, but the fact remains that TB elimination is an achievable goal in the United States. By making TB elimination a priority, we can make TB, once and for all, a disease of the past.

Division of TB Elimination Web site - <http://www.cdc.gov/nchstp/tb/>



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES
Public Health Service
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
National Center for HIV, STD, and TB Prevention
Division of Tuberculosis Elimination

